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ON THE GORILLA AND THE CHIMPANZEE

BY C. R. ASCHEMEIER

There have been several articles of late, in magazines and newspapers, regarding the gorilla and the chimpanzee, with particular reference to the bravery in an advance to the attack, as well as to the relative ability to defend themselves, shown by these great apes. The authors have, in some cases, belittled the gallant courage of the gorilla and pictured the chimpanzee as a brave beast. I wish to give an account of several instances when the gorilla proved himself the gallant; and to express my opinion that the chimpanzee is a coward, as compared with the larger ape. These are based on over two years' experience in hunting these animals in the Fernan Vaz District of the French Congo, which is considered the best region for both the gorilla and the chimpanzee.

Contrary to the opinions of many, the gorilla is, in my experience, just as intelligent as the chimpanzee. I found in every case that, in time of danger, the gorilla used his head better than did the chimpanzee. The latter ape seemed frequently to get "rattled," whereas the gorilla, although not necessarily slow, was, at critical times, much more deliberate in his actions. A chimpanzee always makes off at the first sign of danger, but one never knows when the gorilla may attack.

Their cries, in times of great danger, are characteristic of the natures of the two beasts. When I ran into a chimpanzee there was a wild scramble, a piercing scream, and the animal disappeared into the bush. With the gorilla it was quite different. There was usually a single yell, one that seemed fairly to make the earth tremble, and this was sometimes accompanied by a beating or thumping of the chest. The gorilla, in his deliberate retreat, usually keeps a tree between himself and the hunter.

I was a witness to several instances when gorillas refused to desert their fallen comrades. One morning on the Rembo Elandi, not far from our camp, we encountered a family party of five or more gorillas. Some of them, apparently, had not yet risen from their beds. One old male was on the ground, two were in the trees eating, and the rest were in the nest. One of my native guides advanced as far as was safe, actually to almost under the tree in which the two were feeding, and had the opportunity for close observation of what followed. I shot at one of these gorillas, an animal about two-thirds grown, and saw it tumble from the tree. I ran forward, to find the native standing in

surprise at what he had seen. Just as he was beginning his explanation, an old gorilla that had still remained in its bed arose and with a mighty yell retreated into the timber. The guide explained that the gorilla I had shot from the tree fell to the ground, apparently dead, but that another gorilla had rushed up, gathered it in his arms, and carried it into the bush.

Another time, Pambo, my best guide and helper, went into the bush with another native. Not long after I heard shots and very soon both natives came running, scratched from the bush and out of breath. They said that soon after entering the bush they encountered a large family of gorillas. Pambo said he shot a large female and that a male immediately approached in a very threatening manner, picked up the wounded female, and made off. On turning around the men saw another large male making at them. This one apparently meant business so they ran as fast as they could to get out of his reach.

On two occasions I captured young chimpanzees, but only once did I come near to getting a young gorilla alive. In this case a mother gorilla strayed a bit farther than usual while the baby was feeding. We had heard the animals in the bush, and were advancing cautiously when we saw the young one on the ground. We were closing in to capture it when suddenly we heard, on both sides, the swishing of bushes. Both parents were coming to the rescue as fast as they could. The smaller, presumably a female, went straight to the youngster, picked it up, and stood looking us full in the face. The old male arrived near these two very quickly, and on seeing us gave the terrible gorilla cry, and started off in the lead. As we followed, he dropped to the rear to guard the mother and young. This was one of several times, when the parents showed signs of willingness to sacrifice their own lives for the young, that I did not shoot.

I have frequently been asked as to the probable result in a combat between a gorilla and a chimpanzee. To begin with, one must take into consideration the weight, height, and reach of the two beasts. I shot two grown gorillas that measured five feet, one inch and five feet, three inches in height. The largest adult chimpanzee I got measured four feet and weighed about 150 pounds. The gorillas weigh from 300 to 350 pounds, practically twice as much as the chimpanzees. The chimpanzee is undeniably a strong beast, but the gorilla is just as strong, comparatively, and has the natural advantage of larger size and strength. I think that in the event of an encounter, the gorilla would by sheer weight and strength, wear the chimpanzee down. I

asked native gorilla and chimpanzee hunters which one was the most dangerous game, and the answer was always in favor of the gorilla. To get a real good close-up view of a live gorilla is a treat indeed.

Other questions often asked me on my return from Africa were: Do gorillas or chimpanzees capture native women and carry them off into the bush? And: Will the gorilla advance to attack unless he is wounded? As to the first question, I asked natives in all the localities I visited if such was the case and the answer was always in the negative. I saw several natives, both men and women, however, who had been badly wounded by gorillas. As to the second question, yes. I had gorillas deliberately advance on me and on account of the density of the brush I had to retreat. I found, though, that when a gorilla came at me it always gave up the chase in a little while.

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THE RED SQUIRREL OF THE SITKAN DISTRICT, ALASKA

By H. S. SWARTH

The red squirrel of southeastern Alaska was placed with *Sciurus hudsonicus vancouverensis* by J. A. Allen in his "Revision of the Chickarees," where *vancouverensis* was first described (Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. 10, 1898, p. 269). The present writer, in a report upon a collection of birds and mammals from Vancouver Island, comments upon certain features that distinguish the red squirrel of southeastern Alaska from typical *vancouverensis* of Vancouver Island (Swarth, Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 10, 1912, p. 88), without formally naming the Alaskan race. Further study of the red squirrels of the northwest coast region has emphasized the desirability of giving a name to this Alaskan form. It may be diagnosed as follows:

***Sciurus hudsonicus picatus* new subspecies**

KUPREANOF RED SQUIRREL

Type.—Male adult, skin and skull; no. 8767, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Kupreanof Island, 25 miles south of Kake Village, at southern end of Keku Straits, southeastern Alaska; April 23, 1909; collected by H. S. Swarth; original no. 7281.

¹ Contribution from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California.